

Casa Margarita Bestard  
118 Calle Reina  
Ponce  
Puerto Rico

HABS No. PR-69

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PHOTOGRAPHS

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WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

ADDENDUM  
FOLLOWS

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE  
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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

CASA MARGARITA BESTARD

HABS No. PR-69

Location: 118 Calle Reina, Ponce, Puerto Rico

Present Owner and Occupant: Mrs. Angelina Santini de Valldejuly

Present Use: Residence

Significance: This house is of the indigenous "criollo" style and shows outstanding neo-classical details and fine proportions. Number 116 Calle Reina is almost identical to this house and was built by the same, but unknown architect.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: 1912
2. Architect: Unknown
3. Original and subsequent owners: The following is an incomplete chain of title. Reference is made to the deed and will books of the municipality of Ponce in Puerto Rico.

1910	July 14, 1910. Land conveyed to Don Francisco Ruiz de Porras and Dona Antonia Perez (his wife). Recorded in Book 120, page 32 on July 26, 1910.
1913	July 9, 1913. House and land conveyed to Dona Margarita Bestard. Recorded in Book 210, page 34 on July 9, 1913.
1927	November 29, 1927. House and land willed to Don Rafael Obrador. Recorded in Book 304, page 120 on November 29, 1927.
No date	Conveyed by Don Rafael Obrador and Dona Concepcion Bestard to Don Antonio Quilinchini and Dona Juana Roig (his wife). Recorded on June 17, 1930.
1930	May 26, 1930. Conveyed by Don Antonio Quilichini to Don Miguel Mattei and Dona Carmen Amelio Chardon (his wife).
1938	April 7, 1938. Conveyed by Don Miguel Mattei and Dona Carmen Amelia Chardon de Mattei to Don Arturo Valldejuly and Dona Angelina Santini de Valldejuly (his wife).
4. Original plans and construction: "... Contains a one-story house, mamposteria (masonry), with iron balcony, having an entrance gate... the value of which is \$5500, \$1000 for the lot and \$4500 for the structure." Rafael Obrador y Bestard, representing his widowed mother, Margarita Bestard y Canuellas, declares having built this

this house. (June 12, 1912). He stated that the house "measures 13 mt. 65cm. in front; 9mt. 5mm. deep; and having two extensions in the rear, one 9mt. 5mm. by 3mt. 33cm. and the other 6mt. 50cm. by 4mt. 50cm." Ponce: Book 120; Folio 34 and Book 338; 240.

5. Alterations and additions: No dates known for laundry and servant's room which were added at the rear (North) of the property.

B Historical Context:

The list of owners includes: Margarita Bestard y Canuellas, Rafael Obrador y Bestard, her son and a merchant; Miguel Mattei y Colon, a merchant; Arturo Valldejuly y Delpin, also a merchant; Antonio Quilinchini y Luiggi, formerly Vice Counsel from France. Each of these persons was influential in Ponce. No recorded historical events took place in the house itself.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: The house represents the indigenous or "criollo" style. Houses at numbers 116, 117, and 119 Calle Reina are similar in style, but the house at 118 Calle Reina is the best preserved example of the four-bay masonry house.
2. Condition of fabric: Very good

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: 43'-0" by 59'-4". The four-bay house is one story in height and is "U"-shaped.
2. Foundations: The foundations are constructed of rubble, stone, and mortar laid on ground and rising 2'-0" in height. Foundations are finished in stucco.
3. Wall construction: The entire structure is raised 2'-0" from the ground. The balcony to the South is on a base of cut and dressed pink stone laid in four courses. The main body of the wall is smooth sand/lime stucco over brick and painted light gray. Ornamental features on this elevation include the cast iron columns, scrolled brackets, and the wrought-iron porch railing. The heavy cornice below the parapet wall is arched at the center. (It should be noted that four concrete urns probably existed on top of the parapet wall, as in the house to the immediate east which is identical to 118 Calle Reina.) In addition, two quoined tapered pilasters are located at the east and west ends of the south facade. The pilasters have Ionic capitals. A masonry gateway with an arched, wrought-iron grill gate is located at the east

end of the south elevation. The arched gateway has a keystone and simple moldings. The fanlight is enclosed by a simple, wrought-iron grillwork. Below this are two double, swinging gates. The lower half of each is covered by a solid sheet of iron, painted black.

4. Structural system: The brick masonry bearing wall is covered with stucco. The roof is framed by wooden beams , which are inaccessible.
5. Porches: The covered entrance balcony faces South and is raised above street level. The balcony is decorated by wrought-iron columns and railing, wood railing, wood ceiling and multicolor tiles in the floor, which were locally made. At the rear of the house is an open, concrete terrace with red quarry-tile floor (modern).
6. Openings: doorways and doors; windows and shutters: There is an arched doorway at the center of each bay facing South. Each arch is topped by a keystone. Double rosettes mark the springline. Each doorway has three bands of plaster molding. The glazed fanlights above are divided into five sections of yellow-blue-green translucent glass. Each of the double doors has either a glazed or a louvered section above a solid panel. The louvered sections fold to the interior. At the very center of the south elevation an elliptical lunette, or bull's eye window, opens into the living room. This opening has a plaster, three-banded molding and is enclosed by a scrolled, wrought-iron grill. The northern doorway encloses double doors and is protected by a four-section folding wrought-iron gate opening to the exterior. At the northeast a paneled wood door opens into the kitchen. The remaining original windows consist of wooden casements with operable shutters which are partly glazed and partly louvered on the west facade, and are fixed louvered shutters or fixed, wooden shutters opening to the interior on the east facade. In addition to louvered shutters the dining room has two, four-light, vertical panels. A large, double-hung window with four lights in the fixed, lower section and louvered shutters above, lights the kitchen.
7. Roof: The roof is made up of single pents (shed), which slope from South to North and from East to West. The front balcony also has a shed roof, which slopes from North to South. The whole roof, which is in good condition and painted white, is finished with galvanized, corrugated tin sheets. The frieze of the south (front) facade, which is decorated with base relief rosettes, is capped by a cornice, arched at the center. The cornice is formed by a series of cyma recta and ovolo moldings. The architrave below includes a cavetto molding. A pediment above echoes the form of this entablature. Two plain pilasters frame the central arch, and two others form the corners of the pediment. The porch roof has a separate wood cornice with a fascia composed of two rows of beaded, vertical boards.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans: The building is "U"-shaped, and surrounds a small, open patio with bedrooms, kitchen and dining room to the East and West, and a double parlor and sitting room at the center.
2. Stairways: The only original stairway is located on the east end of the south balcony. Six risers lead from the sidewalk to the balcony. The stairs are constructed of cement and local tile. The wrought iron railing forms a continuation of the porch railing. Steps at the north of the house are modern concrete.
3. Flooring: The floor is finished with locally made cement tiles (6"by 6") in varigated patterns and colors. (The kitchen tiles are asphalt.)
4. Wall and ceiling finish: Walls and ceilings are finished with smooth plaster, painted light tray. A simple, dentilated ceiling molding in the parlor provides the only decoration.
5. Doorways and doors: The four-leaf, folding parlor door has glazed sidelights. A low, open arched area above is closed with a wrought-iron grill. The remaing doors are either solid paneled mahogany or paneled below with eight-light glazing above. In most cases there is a transom above these doors which consists of fixed wooden slats.
6. Mechanical equipment: The original water tank remains at the northeast corner of the roof, although it is no longer in use.

D. Site:

The house is placed immediately adjacent to the sidewalk, reflecting its urban setting. The building lines follow the the compass readings, and is oriented to the South. The back yard is planted with large tropical fruit trees, but is not considered historically significant. The servant's room and laundry at the extreme north end of the property were constructed at a later date and have no architectural or historical isignificance.

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

A. Primary and Unpublished Sources:

County Recorder's Office (Registro de La Propiedad), Departamento de Justicia, Ponce, Puerto Rico: Book 120, Folios 32-34; Book 304, Folios 120-121; Bood 338, Rolios 246-247; Book 393, Folios 41-43.

- B. Interviews: Mr. Acacio L Torres Busquets and Mr. Rafael Louvriel, Archivo Municipal de Ponce, Alcaldia, Ponce, Puerto Rico; August 1972.

PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

This project located in the historic zone of Ponce was jointly sponsored by the Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation of the National Park Service, the Instituto de Cultura Puertorriquena, and the School of Architecture of the University of Puerto Rico. Buildings were recorded during the summer of 1972 by Richard C. Crisson, Project Supervisor, and by student assistant architects Samuel Corchado, Beatriz D'Navarte, Miguel Martinez, Zynia Nazario and Jose Pelaez.

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ADDENDUM TO  
CASA MARGARITA BESTARD  
118 Calle Reina  
Ponce  
Ponce, *County Municipality of*  
Puerto Rico

HABS No. PR- 69

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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY  
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